

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

Legends spoke of the annual pilgrimage the monks made from Kirkstall across the moors over Bouldsworth

In a secluded corner of the countryside, nestled among the meandering streams and lush greenery, stood the remnants of an ancient mill. Its weathered stones, worn down by the passage of time, whispered tales of a bygone era.

As the moonlight bathed the ruins in a silvery glow, the spirits of the past seemed to come alive. Shadows danced upon the crumbling walls, evoking the memory of a once-thriving hub of activity. The old mill, with its square structure and open top, had once been a vital cog in the wheel of Saxon life. It was here that cereal products were ground, providing sustenance for the people.

But as the Normans arrived in the land, seeking to make their mark, the simple sheds gave way to sturdier buildings. The feudal soke mills emerged, and their remnants were scattered across the countryside, including this very spot. A rustic bridge at Netherwood marked the entry point to this enchanting place.

Leaving the footpath to the left, one would follow the course of the stream that flowed from the "Hagg," a place of mystery and natural beauty. A serpentine path led to a breathtaking sight—a miniature peninsula formed by the bend of the river. Rising above the riverbed, the promontory stood proud, its height reaching about 60 or 70 feet.

Upon reaching the top, two green mounds adorned with clusters of thorns greeted the visitors. These hillocks served as the termini of the old mill race, an ancient watercourse that powered the mill's wheels. Beneath the surface, hidden within the gentle slopes below, lay the remnants of the once-mighty mill.

Though time had eroded its physical presence, the mill's history lived on through whispered tales passed down through generations. According to local tradition, this mill had once belonged to the monks of Kirkstall Abbey during their ownership of Monk Hall.

Legends spoke of the annual pilgrimage the monks made from Kirkstall across the moors over Bouldsworth to Extwistle. Along the way, they would pause to preach the gospel to the farmers and shepherds of the surrounding countryside, perched atop the "Abbot Stones," a group of gritty rocks on the northern end of Bouldsworth.

The journey of the monks, carrying the light of their faith through the rugged moorlands, had been a symbol of devotion and resilience. And the mill, a testament to their industrious spirit, had served as a beacon of sustenance for the community.

Now, the old mill stood as a relic of the past, an echo of forgotten times. Visitors who ventured to its ruins could feel the weight of history, the stories of those who had toiled and lived within its walls. The whispers of the wind carried their voices, and the moonlit nights bore witness to their faded glory.

The old mill, with its crumbling stones and moss-covered walls, held the secrets of a bygone era. And as long as its ruins remained, it would continue to be a place where the forms of ages long gone could be felt, and the echoes of the past could still be heard among the rustling leaves and flowing streams.

By Donald Jay.